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Management of traditional retail markets in the United Kingdom: comparative case studies.

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Management of traditional retail markets in the United Kingdom: comparative case studies.

Abstract

Purpose

The paper examines the current state of the management of traditional retail markets (TRM) in the United Kingdom. TRM are indoor and outdoor markets located in town and city centres across the UK, selling food, household goods, clothing and the like.

Design/methodology/approach

The paper employs comparative analysis approach of multiple cases using an analytical framework draws from place management and retail business management literature. The study investigates eleven retail markets in the UK, including seven run by Local Councils, two privately run and two operated by Charity Trusts.

Findings

The paper identifies the management challenges of TRM lie at the intersect between its private-like business entity and the management overseen by local authorities, whose roles and functions are mainly on delivering public services. Although some council markets struggle, it remains a popular model for TRM because it offers social space and inclusion which other types of markets lack. The study also highlights that the environment within which TRM operate, such as policy, infrastructure, business and entrepreneurial aspects play an important role in influencing the performance of the markets.

Originality/value

The paper contributes to the retail literature conceptual and empirical understanding of TRM management – the area which has been mostly neglected and under-researched. It offers an integrated analytical framework, including four dimensions of *policy, infrastructure, business and entrepreneurial environment* (PIBE) to advance the current limited understanding of this traditional form of retailing and sheds light on future research in this area.

Paper type: Research paper

Introduction

According to The National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA), there are 1,173 traditional retail markets (TRM) in the United Kingdom including covered and outdoor markets in town and city centres, providing direct employment for about 57,000 people and offer trading places for 32,400 micro and small businesses (Savage and Wolstenholme, 2018). It is estimated that retail markets' contribution to the UK economy, directly and indirectly, worth over £10 billion (Hallsworth et al., 2015). Unlike other forms of modern retailing like supermarkets, shopping malls and convenient stores, TRM have rich socio-cultural characteristics and architectural history which can date back hundreds of years (Schmiechen and Carls, 1999). Many markets are national heritage and visitors' attractions (Coles, 2014). They are also regarded as community spaces for cultural diversity

and integration as well as promoting local produces (Smith and Sparks, 2000, Guy, 2010, Smith et al., 2014). TRM also play an important role in vibrant town centres (DCLG, 2010c) which preserves the tradition, individuality and diversity of British town shops from the so called 'clone town' trend (Simms et al., 2004). Finally, yet importantly, TRM is a centre of enterprise offering affordable trading venues for start-ups and micro businesses, who are otherwise unable to afford premium rent on high street.

TRM however has experienced a significant decline due to changes in people's living and working behaviours, as well as the policy environment which, in past decades, enabled the rise of supermarkets, both in-town and at out-of-town venues (Jones et al., 2007, House of Commons, 2009a, Coca-Stefaniak et al., 2005). A review by the UK government in 2009, assessing whether TRM are still relevant and beneficial to today's socio-economic context, reemphasises that successful markets can bring multi-faceted benefits to local towns and communities (House of Commons, 2009a). Hence, various forms of support, from planning policy to financial assistance and management have been provided to TRM through local governments (House of Commons, 2009b).

From the policy perspective, examples of support include the 'town centre first' policy and the 'reimagining High Street' scheme, as well as various Town Centre Management (TCM) initiatives (Coca-Stefaniak et al., 2009, Hogg et al., 2007, Hallsworth and Coca-Stefaniak, 2018). The Department for Community and Local Government (DCLG) in collaboration with the National Market Traders Federation (NMTF), also published a good practice guide and shared various forms of management models to local councils, businesses and their stakeholders, in order to promote best practices in managing TRM (DCLG, 2010a, DCLG, 2010b). In 2015, NMTF and the National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) jointly launched a campaign calling for better awareness of the importance of continuing to promote TRM and the need for improved skills of market managers (Savage, 2015). Voluntary campaigns and initiatives by different interest groups such as *Friends of the market*, *Love your local market* and *Teenage market* have also actively promoted local markets across towns and cities.

Despite the significance of this retail format, research on TRM is mostly neglected. According to Bennison et al. (2010), barely one percent of academic articles on retailing in the 1980s and 1990s discuss small shops and local retailing. It is even rarer to find research about TRM in particular. Over the past two decades or so there has been only a small number of research articles published on this topic (e.g. Jones et al., 2007, Smith et al., 2014, Gonzalez and Waley, 2013, Coles, 2014) which will be reviewed in the literature section below. Worse still, the limited understanding of this form of retail spreads thinly over different areas of literature, from town centre management to food provision and socio-cultural geography, posing a challenge for a systematic understanding of how TRM operate and co-exist with modern retail formats. The purpose of this paper is to investigate how TRM are managed and the differences between various types of management of TRM in the UK. Given the socio-cultural characteristics of the TRM, the paper also examines how market operators manage the balance between economic and social purposes of TRM within their local business and institutional contexts.

In the next section, literature review on the topic is presented. Subsequently, drawing on two areas of literature: place management and business management, the paper proposes an analytical framework focusing on four aspects of retail market management including policy, infrastructure and built environment, business operation and entrepreneurship (PIBE). Multiple case studies and key findings from a comparative analysis will be presented in the subsequent section. The final section is the discussion of key findings, limitations and implications of future research.

Literature review

History and patronage of TRM in the UK

Many traditional retail markets (TRM), including market halls and covered markets in city and towns centres across in the UK, have a long social and architectural history date back to the seventeenth century (Schmiechen and Carls, 1999). They were built to replace open-air markets and street trading, bringing together many species of commodity under one roof, which arguably became the most important public building in the British townscape (ibid.) Some argue that TRM laid the foundation for the modern environmentally controlled retail spaces like supermarkets, department stores and shopping malls (Schmiechen and Carls, 1999, Mitchell, 2010, Mitchell, 2014).

The ownership and management of TRM was regulated by UK Parliament since late nineteenth century with the view that TRM were more as a public good for the benefit of the community than as a franchise held by private owners (RCMT, 1891). This was because the size and centred location of TRM attracted frequent social and political activities of the towns where town dwellers of all ages and classes came to the market not just to shop but also to experience the crowds and entertainments (Schmiechen and Carls, 1999). According to the archive from the Royal Commission on Market Rights and Tolls (1891) market ownership underwent a monumental shift from private to public resulting in majority of TRM being owned and managed by local governments, especially in large towns and cities.

Despite a long period of decline due to modern retail revolution throughout the twentieth century to present, two third of TRM across the UK remain under the management of local governments (Savage, 2015). However, local councils' ambition to market UK cities as shopping destinations (Warnaby, 1998) has resulting in priority being focused on modern form of urban retailing while TRM were no longer seen as a socio economic institution worthy of much attention (Schmiechen and Carls, 1999). In addition, grocery shopping behaviour by UK consumers has also experience significant shift from in city centre to out-of-town (De Kervenoael et al., 2006) and to online shopping (Mintel, 2017) which, to a large extent, downplays the role of TRM as a major food shopping venue.

TRM and the dynamic of urban retail in the UK

During 1980s, out-of-town retail development which mirrored US retail model of hyper supermarkets was promoted by many local councils in the UK (Lowe, 2005b, Davies and Howard, 1988), resulting in the decline in demand in food shopping in the inner city market like TRM. But even when out-of-town retail planning policy was tightened in 1990s and the shift toward retail-led urban regeneration was increasingly prominent (Lowe, 2005b, Lowe, 2005a), the role of TRM in the urban retail landscape remains opaque. According to Schmiechen and Carls (1999, pp.213-215), many market halls in prime city locations were either be removed to less desirable sites (e.g. Nottingham and Wolverhampton) or be demolished to make way for car parks or pedestrian space (e.g. Huddersfield and Sheffield) while some of those markets that survived experienced refurbishment with 'modern retail' design adopted from supermarket or department stores (e.g. Wigan and Luton).

The dominant retail-led urban regeneration agenda in the UK during the late 1990s early 2000s attracted a substantial body of research linking urban retail and local economic regeneration. However, the focus was predominantly on retail planning of modern retail concepts like shopping centres, malls and large supermarkets (e.g. Lowe, 2005a, Lowe, 2005b, Lowe, 2007, Mitchell and Kirkup, 2003, Bennison et al., 2007, Guy, 2002) and on the aspect of town centre management (e.g.

Warnaby et al., 2004, Warnaby et al., 2005, Coca-Stefaniak et al., 2009, Cook, 2009, Hogg et al., 2007, Gary et al., 2004, Stubbs et al., 2002) while only a small number of publications focus on small independent retail (e.g. Clifford and Mary, 2003, Smith and Sparks, 2000, Megicks and Warnaby, 2008, Coca-Stefaniak et al., 2010, Coca-Stefaniak et al., 2005) and TRM (e.g. Jones et al., 2007, Jones et al., 2009). Notably, research from Jones et al. (2007) presents evidence of the neglect of TRM which are owned and managed by local councils.

The introduction of Big Society policy in 2010 by the Coalition Government which emphasised on giving local communities power to save local facilities and services threatened with closure, and the right to bid to take over local state-run services (Coalition Government, 2010) has resulted in increased attention to TRM evidenced by the launch of Love Your Local Market (LYLM) in 2012. The Department of Communities and Local Government recognises that "...[TRM] have a role to play in helping to build the 'Big Society' and the good practice guide gives examples of where markets are the hub around which the community revolves" (DCLG, 2010c, p. 4).

It seems that TRM has been recognised more as a social institution than as a business entity like shopping malls where local government could rely on for revenue. The embedded social and historical purpose of this traditional retail format together with the need to maintain its economic sustainability pose a great deal of challenge to the management of TRM so that it can co-exist with the modern, and increasingly digitalised, retail formats across British high street.

Research on traditional retailing.

Previous research, although are limited in scale and scope, have to some extent flagged up the contradiction in the management of TRM. For example, on the one hand, research from Jones et al. (2007) highlight the struggle of TRM in two localities in the UK where they were left deteriorating due to the lack of reinvestment in the infrastructure of the market. On the other, some demonstrate the evidence that traditional markets could be turned into a successful business model, the so-called 'high-society bazaar' serving authentic, high-quality, high-price food to affluent consumers (Vicdan and Firat, 2015, Coles and Crang, 2011). However, some critics have questioned whether turning traditional markets into high end food specialist is a desirable strategy, given its public purpose is the market for everyone (Gonzalez and Waley, 2013) while others argue that ultimately the direction for TRM is shaped by the cultural and economic practices of each region and city (Smith et al., 2014). It is apparent that market managers are expected to consider the balance between economic and social benefits of TRM, but little is known about how such consideration is exercised by different types of ownership and management.

The issues of TRM management has also been studied in other countries like Spain, Indonesia, Singapore and Mexico as summarised in the Table 1. Although these countries have different characteristics, research on TRM share similar appreciation of the role TRM play in enhancing the social and cultural fabric of town centres (Trevizo, 2016, Putra and Rudito, 2015, Mele et al., 2015, Aliyah et al., 2017). Many have also raised the concern of the decline of the markets, its deteriorating condition (Garmendia Arrieta et al., 2018) and lack of support from the policy level to save TRM from being taken over by modern retail formats (Sukmariningsih et al., 2014, Abdul, 2014). The shift in consumer behaviour and the struggle of TRM to co-exist and compete with supermarkets are also discussed (Bagas, 2014, Hermawan et al., 2018, Rahadi, 2012, Purnomo et al., 2018). Insights from these studies suggest that TRM in emerging markets also experience similar declining trend as it is in the West.

Table 1: Summary of previous research on TRM

	Society & community aspects	Place management, infrastructure and architectural aspects	Management and business operations and consumer behaviours
UK			
(Jones et al., 2007)		x	x
(Gonzalez and Waley, 2013)	x		x
(Smith et al., 2014)		x	x
Spain			
(Garmendia Arrieta et al., 2018)		x	
Singapore			
(Mele et al., 2015)	x		
Mexico			
(Trevizo, 2016)	x		
Indonesia			
(Rahadi, 2012)			x
(Abdul, 2014)			x
(Bagas, 2014)			x
(Sukmariningsih et al., 2014)		x	x
(Putra and Rudito, 2015)	x		
(Aliyah et al., 2017)		x	
(Hermawan et al., 2018)			x
(Purnomo et al., 2018)			x

While the number of research on TRM in city and town centres remain limited, farmers' markets as a form of traditional retailing has received substantial attention from scholars in the areas of consumer studies and food supply, not only in the UK but also from a range of other countries (Murphy, 2011, Gumirakiza et al., 2014, Cassia et al., 2012, Syrovátková and Spilková, 2015). These studies address the emerging trend in consumer behaviour which see farmers' markets as an alternative shopping format to supermarkets or, at least, a form of community consumption (Szmigin et al., 2003). As consumers increase their engagement with local produces (SERIO, 2008, Nielsen, 2016), local shops and the socialisation aspect of shopping from these venues compare to out-of-town hypermarkets, a stream of research on small and independent retailing also emerged in retail and sustainability literature to address the socio cultural and economic importance of local retailing (Bennison et al., 2010, Schiffing et al., 2015, Coca-Stefaniak et al., 2010, Lee et al., 2008, Turner and Gardner, 2014, Grimmer et al., 2015, Coca-Stefaniak et al., 2005, Runyan and Droge, 2008). There is a consensus that the change in consumption behaviour has to some extent positively impacted on local and traditional retailing.

Due to the location nature of small independent shops and TRM, studies from the perspective of place and space management of retail are also relatively well represented in the urban planning and town centre management literature (Stubbs et al., 2002, Barata-Salgueiro and Erkip, 2014, Kärrholm et al., 2014, Hallsworth and Coca-Stefaniak, 2018, Coca-Stefaniak and Carroll, 2015). These studies highlight that not only small independent retail stores are important part of the urban retail fabric,

but also the coordinated place and space management could enhance the resilience and relevance (Powe et al., 2009) of the traditional retail format in the wake of economic crisis and digital transformation of retailing.

In summary, the recent developments of literature relating to farmers' markets and local independent retailing have laid a good foundation for TRM research. However, it becomes apparent that the conceptualisation of TRM management needs to move beyond a singular concept of it being a retail venue space, a place or an institutionalised community business entity to viewing this special form of retail provision as a bundle of practices in a context of intertwined internal and external environment (Smith et al., 2014, Berndt and Boeckler, 2011). While previous studies on TRM have shed a good light onto the condition and the changing nature of TRM, their focus on narrow aspect of place, space or social value of markets are inadequate to address the wider management challenges that TRM face, such as the business and entrepreneurial environment, the policy and infrastructure conditions which underpin the retail service provision. This paper, through interdisciplinary approach, aims to offer a clearer conceptual and empirical understanding of the management of TRM.

Framework development

The challenge of managing TRM as well as active effort from many Local Councils (LCs) in reviving the state of TRM has led to a recognition by NABMA that the role of LCs have moved beyond their regulatory function (i.e. ensuring health and safety standards are met) to including active participation in "business development, marketing and events management." (Savage, 2015, p.20). This development suggests that LCs, whose role are primarily for maintaining and improving public services, need to be proactive as private actors in order to keep TRM from declining. Although there are multiple management models in place, LCs are by far the most popular owner and operator of TRM (65%) followed by private (18%) and charity operators (5%), with the remaining 12% shared between various forms of partnerships and social enterprises (Savage, 2015).

The local environment in which the market operates also plays an important role (Smith et al., 2014). It has been reported that the success of TRM is uneven between regions in the UK with London and the North East outperforming the West Midland and Yorkshire while a smaller difference was observed between markets operated by LCs and private operators (Zasada, 2012). According to Wrigley and Lambiri (2014) four key areas which influence retail practices in British towns and cities are:

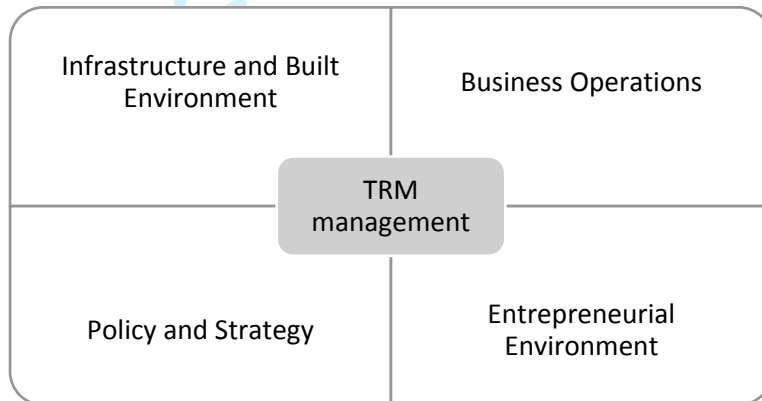
- a) policy application and implementation;
- b) investment in the design and maintenance of the built environment for the infrastructural and architectural attractiveness;
- c) business operational environments, such as investment in organisation of socio-economic and tourism events and promotions; and
- d) entrepreneurial cultures, such as innovation and pro-activeness in seeking and connecting business opportunities.

The first two aspects of *policy* and *infrastructure* implementation posit the main characteristics of place management in which the focus is centred on LCs taking a regulatory and investment role in physical environment and policy implementation (Bennison et al., 2010). The latter two aspects of *business operations* and *entrepreneurship* are more associated with commercial characteristics of business management but less frequently discussed in the context of town centre and shopping

provision (ibid.). Bennison et al. (2010) suggests that linking commercial and locational perspectives of retail management will likely offer the best basis for retail provisions.

Drawing from the above concepts by Wrigley and Lambiri (2014) and Bennison et al. (2010), this paper proposes an analytical framework, as shown in Figure 1, including four dimensions of: Policy and Strategy, Infrastructure and built environment, Business Operations and Entrepreneurial environment. The framework enables the identification of how different locations and types of market ownerships impact on the management of TRM.

Figure1. Aspects of retail market service provisions – the PIBE framework



Policy and Strategy: TRM is considered as a place for commercial and social activities (DCLG, 2010c). The balance between commercial and social focus of the market is reflected through market's policy and strategy such as terms and conditions for rent and fee and the types of products and services the market wants to promote. Markets in different locations with different types of management model could have varying level of strategic approach to TRM management.

Infrastructure and Built Environment: TRM with its unique features of a retail format is confined to place and space characteristics. Some markets naturally have more advantages than the other in terms of its location to which towns and cities it belongs (Smith et al., 2014). External infrastructure and built environment surrounding the market and town centre can have a profound impact on trade. This can range from the agglomeration of individual retail outlets to streetscapes and façade, public facilities (e.g. parking, pedestrian precincts, lighting and signage) as well as internal architecture of the market (Jones et al., 2007).

Business Operations: Previous research suggests that planning and infrastructure interventions are inadequate to address the challenges that retail markets face in today's competition and changing consumer needs and behaviours (De Kervenoael et al., 2006). Proactive approach to marketing and promotion could help markets to adapt and thrive. Some local authorities have taken initiatives in organising events like food and drink festivals to promote markets' products and services to the local communities and visitors (Bennison et al., 2010). These activities directly address the marketing needs for small retailers and traders who have limited capabilities and resources to promote their products. Research on gentrification has, however, warned that if actions are taken too far to focus on attracting wealthy visitors, it could disadvantage the less well-off shoppers whose day to day consumption relies on affordable food provisions from the market (Gonzalez and Waley, 2013). This tension poses a challenge to market managers, especially to LCs run markets, in maintaining the balance between economic and social impacts of a proactive retail strategy.

Entrepreneurial Environment: Entrepreneurship is about innovation, risk taking and alertness to opportunities (Klein et al., 2013). Retail innovation is a key ingredient for supporting growth and competitiveness (Aubrey and Judge, 2012). The UK government, stated in its report that it is important for market managers to move beyond its statutory role of day to day management to looking for innovation and good practice from others around them (DCLG, 2010a, p.4). Innovative retail management approaches can range from technology upgrading (Pantano, 2014, Burt and Sparks, 2003) to introduction of new services (Berry et al., 2010, Hinrichs et al., 2004). Research on innovation has, however, established that small businesses face multiple challenges when it comes to innovation. This includes motivation to innovate (Löfqvist, 2012) and the willingness to adopt new services (Marcati et al., 2008). Due to the interdependent nature between market managers and individual traders in the retail market context, entrepreneurial innovativeness depends on the pro-activeness of both actors and the business environment in which markets operate.

In summary, the interdependent nature of TRM makes it necessary to investigate its management from the four dimensions in order to provide adequate understanding and explanation of how TRMs are managed.

Method of data

Selection of markets

As the objective of this paper is to examine the current state of TRM management in the UK, this study adopts an exploratory research approach to study a small number of markets across England. Multiple case study approach has been commonly used in previous retail research (e.g. Smith et al., 2014, Jones et al., 2007, Powe et al., 2009) as it enables comparisons to be made between markets. In depth analysis of multiple cases is useful for the understanding of how and why certain market is managed (Yin, 2009) and case examples can ease the connection between academia and managerial practices (Simon et al., 1996, Vissak, 2010).

Adopting similar approach from Powe et al. (2009), eleven markets across Northern England and London area (as shown in the Figure 2) were selected for the study. This number offers a good balance of breadth and depth in data collection and analysis (Rowley, 2002, Eisenhardt, 1989, Powe et al., 2009). Among the selected eleven markets, seven are managed by LCs, two are owned by private companies and the remaining two are owned and operated by Charitable Trusts, as detailed in the Table 2. Although the number of cases per ownership type is imbalanced, it reflects the dominant proportion of TRM managed by LCs and only a small number run by the private and charitable sector (Savage, 2015).

The selection criteria were mainly based on ownership type and location. The main source used to identify LC's owned markets is through NABMA's website and its discussion forum where member markets exchange information and share their practices. Seven markets owned and operated by LCs were identified and selected for the research. These markets are located in the Northern region of England which share similar characteristics in terms of local and regional socio-economic development.

There was a challenge to get access to private and charity owned markets due to the small number of these types of market ownership and their dispersed locations across different regions in the UK. Two private owned markets in London and Durham were identified through a snowball method from contacts established with a LCs market. Four charity and community owned markets were identified through Google search and social media network of LYLM but only two charity markets in London responded and subsequently participated in the research. The limitation of this sampling method is

that it presents some elements of bias in the sample. For example, one of the charity market – the Borough market – is in itself a London’s attraction and well-known for the provision of ‘fine food’ and high quality produces (Coles and Crang 2011). For this reason, it is by no mean a representation of the charity sector’s markets. However, because this research focuses on exploring and analysing management practices of market operators rather than measuring successes and failures, potential bias from the outstanding success of the Borough market is minimised.

Data collection and analysis

The first phase of data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews. In total fifteen face to face and telephone interviews with eleven market managers and four market service officers from Kirkgate, Accrington, Halifax and Blackburn market were conducted in 2016 and early 2017. The interviews last between 35 to 90 minutes and all were recorded and transcribed. In the case of Kirkgate and Accrington market, follow up telephone interviews were conducted in addition to the initial interviews. Beside the interview data, some LCs also provide reports and policy documents in a form of hard copies and electronic files sent via email.

The second phase of data collection involved a desk research, collecting further published information from the website of the markers, local councils as well as from NABMA and NMTF. The documentary data source is used to cross check with the interview data and in some cases being cited in the finding as a written evidence to support the interview data. Interview transcription and documentary data were thematically analysed on a single case basis before cross comparison with other markets. The data was coded and organised into four main themes using the PIBE framework. The use of semi-structured analytical framework like PIBE is useful for multiple case analysis as it enables the identification and comparison of the findings (McClintock et al., 1979).

Table 2: Market characteristics

Markets	Owner/Operator	Capacity (stalls)	Average Occupancy	Lease type
Blackburn Market	Local Council	80	80%	Long term (6 years)
Accrington Market	Local Council	70	83%	Long term (3 years) and short term (12 months)
Burnley Market	Local Council	65	85%	Short term (3-12 months)
Scarborough Market	Local Council	~90	(under refurbishment)	Long term & short term rent
Kirkgate Market	Local Council	200	85%	Long term. Short term for start-up
Bolton Market	Local Council	87	85%	Long term (3-7 years)
Halifax Market	Local Council	179	94%	Long term (5 years)
London Borough Market	Charity Trust	117	100%	Short term. Only 40 on long term
Enfield Market	Charity Trust	70 (outdoor)	100%	Long term (permanent) and short term (daily license)
Durham Market	Private	50	100%	Weekly license
Tooting Market	Private	50	100%	Weekly license

Figure 2. Market locations



Findings

Policy and Strategy

Local councils are relatively autonomous in setting the policy for TRM such as rent and fee terms, recruitment of traders and to some extent defining the products and services provision for the market. Burnley and Halifax market, for example, explicitly look for start-ups in fresh food provisions while Kirkgate Market tends to prefer experienced traders with new products and services rather than fresh start-ups. Some councils offer incentives to traders through reduction of rent (e.g. Burnley and Halifax market) while others introduce incentives to market shoppers such as free or reduced parking fees (e.g. Kirkgate and Accrington market). Halifax market, for example, offer as much as free rent for new start-ups. The consideration also aims to offer the local community a social and community meeting space within the market premises such as food courts and event areas.

Most LCs markets offer long term leases which provide some level of certainty for traders. However, they have preference for certain types of products being offered at the markets. For example, all markets seem to have high preference for fresh produce and World food to meet diverse needs of multi-cultural societies and visitors as well as to distinguish themselves from supermarket provisions. At the time of research most LCs markets have slightly above eighty percent occupancy which had been increased compare to previous years. Burnley market for example has reported that the period before 2016 the market occupancy was as low as 63%. But thanks to their open door

approach to new start-ups and traders from outside the local area, the occupancy rate increased to 85% in 2016.

Unlike the council run markets, the two private and two charity managed markets have for many years operating in full occupancy and a waiting list. Privately run markets have a contrast difference to council markets in terms of rent policy as they offer traders weekly instead of long term rent. The rent policy from Tooting Market states:

“We offer our tenants Tenancies at Will agreements. This agreement gives the tenant the right to vacate their unit by giving a notice at will – whenever the tenant likes. This, however, also gives the landlords the same right to give the tenant notice at their will. In case of larger units, short-term and long-term tenancies may be considered” (Tooting Market Rental Procedural and Regulation).

Durham market, privately owned by the Durham Markets Company Ltd, operates in a similar manner. The interviewed market manager expresses that although most of their registered traders are long-term traders with the market, weekly rent contracts enable the market to take full control of the trading space and have maximum flexibility in terms of changing rent fees, shorter notice to replace unattractive businesses or offering alternative weekly rent to more traders to minimise risks of vacancy. In contrast, council markets tend to have a requirement of six months’ notice of any changes in rent from both parties. Any changes in fees in council run markets would have to go through a consultation process before it can be applied.

The Borough market in London, which is a registered charity and managed by a board of Trustees, has always been in high demand from traders wanting to book a space. The strategic focus on high quality produces has enhanced the market’s reputation and in turn attracts affluent customers and visitors to the market. According to the market manager, the selection process of new traders is rigorous, including interviews, submission of business plan and various tests of quality of products and services as well as a sustainability plan. During their tenancy, traders are also subjected to ‘mystery-shopper’ checks to ensure the quality of their product and service are maintained. For Borough market, making it as an attraction spot for Londoners and visitors is a goal in itself, hence, the market management upholds their own policy and regulations to maintain its standard.

Unlike Borough market, Enfield market in North London, owned by the Old Enfield Charitable Trust, has a hybrid model of management in which goals and strategic investment of the market are overseen by the Trust while day to day operation is subcontracted to a private market operator company. The Trust wants to use the market as a means to generate funds for its end goal – the mission to financially support individuals, families and organisations who live and work in the Ancient Parish of Enfield. For this reason, the market policy and the way in which relationship between traders and market management is governed are similar to private run markets with focus on maximising occupancy and rent income. Rent is charged on a daily basis. Permanent traders have a guaranteed stall but would be subjected to a fine if they fail to show up by 8.30am of the trading day and the stall will be given to a casual trader. Since the renovation in 2015 which included an 80 seaters food court, the market has a waiting list of food traders want to do business with the market.

Infrastructure and built environment

Markets in large cities like Leeds and London benefit from a higher number of visitors compare to other smaller towns and cities. They also have the advantages of a better infrastructure and service provisions such as transport and accessibility to a variety of High Street shops than those at smaller

towns. While the condition of external environments is often beyond the influence of market management, maintaining and improving services and facilities within the market premises is the responsibility of market operators. However, each LC has different budgets and priorities, therefore, standards of this provision vary widely between council run markets. For example, Halifax market reported they have issues of deteriorating interiors but have not yet been allocated funding for repair and refurbishment works. The market manager states that revenue and surplus from the markets is often used to subsidise other part of councils' public services. Due to budget cuts from the central government, the council must look for different sources of income to cover the budget deficit and they are therefore unable to afford saving for re-investment to the market. The struggle to keep markets' infrastructure up to date seems to be common amongst most of the participating council markets with some exceptions like Scarborough, Bolton and Leeds Kirkgate market which have had substantial investments over the recent years. They had an investment of £2.7, £4.5 and £12.3 million respectively for renew and extension of the markets as the councils see potential growth in this form of retail.

The private and charity operated markets are, unlike council markets, financially independent and therefore able to support their market's investment as and when needed. For example, Enfield Trust made a substantial investment into the market in 2015 to boost market revenue which provides a major source of funding to the £250,000 grants the charity supports local community every year. Borough market has shown substantial interest in investment in sustainability initiatives and promotion of its market brand and value. Private markets like Durham and Tooting are relatively small and do not have option to expand the physical space which is already operated in full capacity. The market managers state that any investment or upgrade of interiors must be economically justified.

It is apparent that the differentiation between council run markets is due to the council's financial strengths and priority. To some extent, council and charity markets operate in similar ways. Some see markets as a socio-economic project in itself (e.g. achieving a status, symbol and attraction to the city and town) while others see markets as a means to achieve different ends (e.g. financing other activities or causes).

Business operations

Findings from interviews with all market managers show a common concern about competition from supermarkets, convenience stores and the threats from online shopping. Older consumers who tend to be the loyal shoppers with the markets may turn to online shopping while the younger consumers are more online active and less incline to shop at the market. Beside those challenges, markets managers especially in bigger towns and cities like Leeds, London and Scarborough recognise an emerging trend of green and ethical shoppers who prefer local fresh produces and minimal packaging.

“Leeds city has a large number of professionals who work in the city centre and love to shop at the market because they want to support local producers and traders. They also perceive market foods are better value, fresh and less packaging. But the problem here is we don't open outside working hours therefore the timing is not ideal for professional shoppers. We've got to think about other retail channel where we can help traders to promote and sell their products” (Leed Kirkgate market manager)

“Durham has a very large student population but they don’t seem to be very keen to shop at the market. Social media presence is a way to engage with these young shoppers” (Durham market manager)

Most markets have some online presences such as the use of social media like Twitter, Facebook, Websites and e-newsletters but the level of involvement in online activities varies widely amongst the studied markets. As summarised in Table 3, some markets are very social media active while others do not even have their own market website and show limited engagement in both online and offline activities.

Some markets like Accrington, Leeds Kirkgate and Tooting have gone further to implementing ecommerce websites for online shopping and home delivery. But these activities were not continued after a year trial period due to lack of funding for development to a full service as well as lack of strong participation from traders and shoppers. Similarly, Borough Market had in the past (between 2013 and 2014) initiated a Shop & Drop service which provided chilled storage for shoppers in exchange for a small fee. But the service was soon closed because of lack of interest from shoppers. Durham Market is perhaps the most cautious. Interviews with the market manager found that the market had conducted research looking into the potential of offering online shopping but concluded that the demand was not sufficient to make it a good investment.

The above evidence of business innovativeness shows LCs markets can be as active and innovative as private and charity run markets. However, the participation and support from traders, shoppers and the enabling environment in which the market operates would have detrimental impacts on the success of those interventions.

Table 3: Summary of key business initiatives

Markets	Operators	Online presence ¹			Offline activities
		Website	Facebook followers	Twitter followers	
Blackburn Market	LC	Yes. Featured individual traders	8,777	9,463	Free delivery to local areas. Consider provision of Amazon locker service.
Accrington Market	LC	N/a	135	N/a	Food Festivals organised on occasional basis.
Burnley Market	LC	Yes. Featured individual traders	2,535	685	Promote World food. Advertise via local radio and newspaper. Consider provision of Amazon locker service
Scarborough Market	LC	Yes. Featured individual traders	2,111	895	Newly refurbish market as a community hub.
Kirkgate Market	LC	Yes. Featured Shop & Drop service	8,655	902	Shop & Drop service. Event space for exhibitions and music/art performance. Promote via Visit Leeds tourism centre.
Bolton Market	LC	Yes. Featured individual traders	4,081	6,670	Food and Drink Festival. Teenage Market. Recognised as a Community Event market.

¹ The figure on social media followers are updated as of 26th April 2018.

Halifax Market	LC	N/a	457	N/a	Occasional Food Festival events.
London Borough Market	Charity	Yes. Monthly e-newsletters	99,539	69,700	Tourists attraction. Local school's education and visits.
Enfield Market	Charity	Yes.	2,991	2,723	Open from Thursdays to Saturdays with ad hoc events on Sundays.
Durham Market	Private	Yes.	9,825	3,355	Standard trading practices. Free weekly delivery to local colleges.
Tooting Market	Private	Yes. Featured individual traders	1,859	7,380	Standard trading practices. Almost no community events at the market.

Entrepreneurial environment

Findings from the study show a clear distinction in entrepreneurial environment in different market, particularly among LCs markets. On the one hand, some councils see their TRM as a social venue where 'people meet and greet'; 'community comes together'; or 'preserves traditional values'. On the other, markets are viewed as a commercial project generating revenue to serve other end goals. In the latter approach, the focus is more about how to help traders promote their products and how to attract shoppers to come to the market while the former perspective is more about maintaining the retail space for the communities who rely on the market. Halifax and Accrington markets are a couple of such example where market managers feel constraint in what they could do due to the lack of enabling environment from the council.

We wish to do more for the market like engaging with social media. It is like a new word of mouth and it can be very effective promotion tool for the market. But there is no existing infrastructure to support such activities, there is no protocols and policies outlining boundaries for such activities... Existing skills set are not matching with the current market needs and there is no support in developing those skills. (Accrington market manager)

Blackburn Market however shows a contrast picture of how the market has thrived during difficult times because of the pro-business supporting environment it receives from the Blackburn with Darwen Council. The market place was deteriorated and later demolished in 2009 leading to the Council's decision to move the market trading to a rent floor within a shopping mall. The market quickly picks up the advantages of being in a shopping mall having opportunities to offer attractive meeting and shopping place for diverse shoppers. It results in the annual revenue of £1.5 million surplus despite the high renting cost at the shopping mall. The council funded and own the market website but it was designed in a way that each trader in the market can have a dedicated page on the website where they can list their products and services online without extra charges. This has facilitated many traders to engage in online trading and delivery service with their customers. The market is also promoted to visitors and tourists through Visit Lancashire website.

Similar to the Blackburn Market, the Kirkgate Market in Leeds received £99,000 funding from Innovate UK in 2014 to implement a concept of *The First Omni-Channel Market*. The concept aims to "create a digitally enabled shopping experience merging a marketplace environment with digital support that brings local flavour and convenience for market shoppers" (Innovate UK, 2014, p.21). The overall objective was to enable the engagement of as wider reach of shoppers as possible to maximise the service provision at the market. However, result from the trial period shows relatively low participation and engagement from market traders as they are reluctant to adopt a new business approach of online payment and delivery.

Bolton Market has also been proactive in promoting entrepreneurship amongst younger generation, for example, offering young people aged 13 to 25 years old an opportunity to showcase their business ideas or reduced rent to start ups. The scheme aims to identify a new generation of market traders by making young people an active part of town centres.

Charity and private run markets are relatively autonomous in their business strategy and free from the system's bureaucracy. Borough Market is an example of a successful entrepreneurship. It exploits market opportunity from the location and the consumers' trends for authentic and high quality produces. But the locational and institutional context of Borough Market is not easily replicated elsewhere, even for private run markets which are strongly profit driven but are constraint by local characteristics.

Discussion and conclusion

The multiple case analysis of TRM through the lens of management ownership and PIBE framework, as summarised in Table 4, advances our understanding how and why different market management approaches co-exist. It is apparent from the case studies that making the right balance between economic effectiveness and socio-cultural inclusiveness poses a challenge to this form of retail provisions. Compared to the charity and private operators, LCs have the advantages of coordinating and leveraging market operations to various areas of public services from planning to transport and tourism. However, unlike charity and private operators, LCs are constraint by the mandate to promote inclusive public services. Finding from the study, on the one hand, supports UK's government's view that "Local government is best placed to operate markets in their community because they are able to integrate its management into the wider physical economic and social development strategies of the local area"(House of Commons, 2009a, p.164). On the other, the study also highlights a number of challenges facing LC markets, to which efforts to overcome the challenges are uneven across towns and cities.

Table 4: Summary of retail market management by types of ownership

Ownership/ Management type	Policy and regulation	Infrastructure and built environment	Business operation	Entrepreneurship
LCs	Guided by general public services rules and principles (e.g. mandatory consultation). Slow to adjust to changes and market demand	Ability to coordinate different planning areas e.g. tourism and public transport to support market services. Ability to leverage investment, but varied by cities and town	Non-selective target of consumers or traders. Business ethos: 'Market for everyone'	Focus on socio-economic development (e.g. promotion of 'start ups', 'teenager market'). Innovative business approaches are uneven across towns and cities.
Charity	Guided by the Trusts' goals and objectives. Responsiveness to changing	Rely on city/town infrastructure. Investment to the market varies by Trusts.	Selective target consumers and traders. Management approaches vary by	Ambitious in brand building and / or revenue generation for charity activities. Willing to innovate

	market demands		charitable objectives.	if meet charitable goals
Private	Guided by for-profit business management model. Highly flexible. Responsiveness to changing market demands	Rely on city/town infrastructure. Mostly focus on maintenance and maximise space utilisation.	Non-selective target consumers but selective of traders. Strong focus on high occupancy rate and financial return on investment.	Straight forward goal as a for profit business entity. Non-risk taking. Cautious in offering new services.

Firstly, the challenge lies at the intersection between a private-like business entity of TRM and the management overseen by LCs, whose roles and functions are mainly on delivering public services rather than making profit. So, on the one hand retail markets want to be selective of which products and services to offer in order to be competitive. On the other, local councils must ensure the market retains its purpose and role as a traditional market for everyone, especially for the vulnerable groups including shoppers and traders who have long been attached to the place and the life of the market. Some criticisms of retail markets' innovation claim that markets' modernisation could lead to gentrification and exclusion (Gonzalez and Waley, 2013, Burgess, 2014). For example, traders who do not fit with the retail mix strategy of the market may be displaced and subsequently their customers will be affected (Balsas, 2014).

In line with the public entrepreneurship literature, the constraints are not just bureaucracy (Edwards et al., 2002, Klein et al., 2010) but also social responsibility of public actors (Kobrak, 1996, deLeon, 1996). The 'tenancies at will' model from private run markets is not necessary applicable to council markets which aim to offer local businesses and start-ups a stable trading venues. A successful example of a charity managed Borough Market, which targets affluent consumers is also clearly not a desirable solution to the LCs' markets as it counters the purpose of service to 'everyone'. Some could argue that public actors could have a 'profit making' arm as a means to serve social ends (Hjorth and Bjerke, 2006). Nevertheless, profit driven policy or interventions by public actors often needs to be socially justified (Bernier and Hafsi, 2007). This is one of the obstacles that prevents LCs' markets from being commercially competitive.

This study offers explanation why despite several alternative management models exist, LCs' markets retain their popularity amongst traders and local communities. In fact, proportion of LCs' operated markets increases from 60% in 2009 to 65% in 2015 (Savage, 2015, Retail Markets Alliance, 2009). A recent survey of 159 markets by NABMA shows that nearly a third of the LCs' markets want to look for alternative management model but only less than 5% made a successful transition to, for example, outsourcing to private operators because of the lack of political and public support to such change (Wolstenholme, 2017).

Secondly, the study shows TRM management practices vary significantly amongst different councils. This variation directly links to the state of built environment and infrastructure of towns and cities and their local characteristics (Jones et al., 2007, Smith et al., 2014). But more importantly it is influenced by the financial strengths of each council. Private and charity run markets are financially independent while council markets are often made to share their funding with other public services. Some council markets have been considered as a 'cash cow' for the councils (Gonzalez and Waley,

2013). Although such shared responsibility signals positive contributions of the market, some council markets, as experienced from the study, have been left deteriorating, even beyond repair, because of the lack of having a re-investment budget.

The lack of support for traditional markets could be due to the view that the traditional market is not a desirable economic venue. Unlike continental Europe, where markets are popular forms of retail (Canada, 2012), the 'British's perception' of markets tend to be that markets are mainly working class spaces, providing "cheap, tatty, shoddy produce" (Estates Gazette, 2013) with traders regarded as being "loud, rude, whingeing" (Gonzalez and Waley, 2013, p.969). This challenge reflects the 'Britishness' perception of TRM which is not necessarily the same for markets elsewhere outside the UK.

Finally, effective management requires market managers to have entrepreneurship attributes, such as awareness and preparedness for business opportunities as well as for challenges (Kivleniece and Quelin, 2012). Current literature also puts emphasis on entrepreneurship culture and spirit as one of the factors influencing the health of High Streets across the UK (Wrigley and Lambiri, 2014). This is evidenced in this study that markets which are situated in an entrepreneurial enabling environment seem to be more proactive in trying out new approaches. However, findings from this study highlight the challenge these proactive markets face is the readiness of those they aim to support such as traders. Some initiatives of e-commerce services which have had a difficult start are because traditional traders are not ready to take on such changes. This finding supports the claim that small businesses often suffered from the so called 'attitudinal barrier' preventing them from improving and scaling up their business (Jones et al., 2014). According to a report by Deloitte (2014), it is estimated about 1.5 million micro businesses in the UK do not grow and have no desire to do so. Hence, the conceptualisation of entrepreneurial environment should look beyond the managerial actors of TRM to including the beneficiaries whom the system aims to support.

The declining trend of UK high street with many shops being shut down and footfall decreased (Timpson, 2018, Millington et al., 2018) has led to the allocation of government's budget to support town centres across the UK (MHCLG, 2019). Initiatives such as cutting business rate, improving transportation link and other policy measures to make high street attractive to businesses and local communities could directly or indirectly benefit TRM. Whilst various policy measures have been considered and put in place, there is a recognition that a one-size-fits-all solution will not work and a good practice in one place is not necessary applicable to others. Nevertheless, finding from this research shows that although LCs have the leverage in coordinating market operations with various areas of public services from planning to transport and tourism, not many LCs have used this advantage. One example LCs markets could learn from the Borough Market is to make TRM as a place for regular educational activities with local schools, raising awareness of TRM and its provision of local produces to school children. Some markets with rich cultural and architectural history could collaborate with visitor centre to promote organised tours to visitors like the Kirkgate market. As suggested in the High Street 2030 report (Millington et al., 2018), there is a need for a coordinated effort at the local level to make town centre as a hub for local community.

Limitation and future research

This paper draws on the intersection of place management and retail business management literature to compare multiple cases of the management of TRM. Despite empirical contributions, the paper is not without limitations. Firstly, the study draws evidence from a small number of markets from public, private and charitable sector. Therefore, it is unable to generalise findings to these operators, especially in the charity sub-group due to their diverse practices in supporting their

own charitable goals. Evidence from the two charity markets shows valuable insights to such divergence and this sub-group can be a subject of further research. Similarly, there are various types of TRM management models exist in the UK which could be explored such as social enterprise, public-private partnership and trader cooperatives (DCLG, 2010b). A close example of this is the research by Calderwood and Davies (2012) examining the Community Retail Enterprise model which own and operate a network of small shops in rural areas across UK. Future research inquiries on the retail management will advance the current understanding of this largely neglected area of retail management.

Secondly, market shoppers and traders are two important stakeholders of TRM. But to the best of our knowledge none of the previous research have studied these important actors. On the one hand, the declining trend of UK high street and the prominent of online shopping (Fletcher et al., 2016, Resnick et al., 2014, Turner and Gardner, 2014) beg the question of the relevance of retail service experience to consumers. On the other, the growing trend of consumers preference of local produces and authentic food (Berg and Preston, 2017, Crawford et al., 2018, Carey et al., 2011) signals the support for the revitalisation of TRM. Future research inquiry could be focusing on who are the TRM shoppers and what are their motivation to shop at the markets? What are the business strategies of market traders to retain their customers and to compete with online and supermarket multiples? Future research on these aspects of retail market will be valuable to advance the understanding of the opportunities and threats to the survival of TRM in particular and the UK high street in general.

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